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HISTORY  
OF THE  
EASTERDAY FAMILY

BY  
L. F. M. EASTERDAY  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

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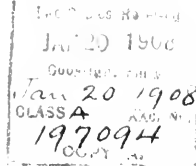
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"So teach us to number our days that we may apply  
our hearts unto wisdom."

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**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**EASTERDAY FAMILY**



**PART FIRST**



**Introduction.**

The writer, L. F. M. Easterday, of Lincoln, Nebr., begins the compiling of this history under date of November 20, 1907. He recognizes with satisfaction that in the great country of our adoption one can make little use of the credit of his ancestry, titled as that ancestry may have been. However, he heartily accords in this old saying: "Other things being equal, we prefer to trust the man who has had a grandfather."

More than forty years ago the writer became interested in securing historical facts relative to his people. Since that time he has written very many letters of inquiry, and has received many responses. As would be supposed, the inquiries very much outnumber the responses. These written responses and traditions, handed down orally, are depended upon for the history. And, whilst they are meager enough, the writer feels that no other one has in hand so much material needful in the task of compiling a reliable history as is now in his possession. He feels, too, that such compiling has become necessary in order to preserve that which is within his reach. Relatives appreciating these facts have urged him to perform this duty. The expression of their desire renders an arduous task more pleasing to perform.

### **The Traditional Beginning.**

A story goes that in the long ago a baby boy was found in the Fatherland of Germany on the morning of Easter Day. A conspicuous package was discovered on the door-step of a great church building when the worshipers were convening "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning." The package was opened and the smile of a comfortable baby boy at once captured the hearts of the increasing company. The conduct of the parents in disposing of the son may almost be forgiven when their interest in his welfare is so clearly evidenced by the careful selection of time and place for the deposit of the treasure.

The day of the finding of the boy—Easter Day, the Christian Easter Day—suggested for him a beautiful name. He was cared for by good people, grew to manhood and became the ancestor of the hosts who bear the name of Easterday. It may here be stated that the given name, Christian, has been used freely by the family in all succeeding generations, and it may be added also that the type of their Christianity has been indicated by the similar use of the name Martin, the given name of the great reformer, Dr. Martin Luther.

### **Early History of Christian Easterday and His Family.**

How many generations of Easterdays preceded those to be named in this history cannot now be stated. To the interested reader the more important fact is that about the year 1750 a man known as Christian Easterday and his bride, whose name had been Julia Blessing, came from Germany, leaving there many relatives and friends, and located temporarily in Virginia, near the southwest corner of that state. There is some reason for believing that they were accompanied by George Blessing and Julia Easterday, another groom and bride, Mrs. Blessing being the sister of Mr. Easterday, and Mr. Blessing being the brother of Mrs. Easterday.

The part of Germany from which they came was probably Saxony, although Alsace has been mentioned as their former home. Possibly a preceding generation had moved

from the former to the latter part of Germany, the sojourning in Alsace being temporary. In case there be in Saxony a town or place bearing the name of Elsass or Elsale, the confusion would be relieved.

It is very certain that the family name in Germany was Ostertag or Osterdock, and that this was translated to Easterday after their arrival in America. A statement made in a letter at hand is that the name was Easterday before they left Germany. This is very doubtful. A curious fact is that the will of the Senior Easterday was signed Christian Osterday under date of October 29, 1804.

The first location of Mr. and Mrs. Christian Easterday in southwest Virginia is not very definite. It was probably about 250 miles west of Jamestown and about the same distance southwest of Harper's Ferry. Their first son, Christian, was born in Virginia on November 27, 1752. Indian troubles drove them from their Virginia home, or homes, and they went to what is now known as Frederick County, Maryland, locating in the beautiful Middletown Valley probably in the spring of 1753 or 1754. In this journey of nearly 250 miles, which was probably not continuous, but broken into two or three parts, they passed almost directly northeasterly along the Blue Ridge Mountains, crossing the Potomac River a few miles below and east of Harper's Ferry.

The first lodging place north of the Potomac River of this family of three was under a large oak by the side of a spring of clear, cold water, and this providentially was destined to fix their permanent home all the remaining days of their lives. This determined the location of the Easterday farm, which is one and a half miles west of the town known as Jefferson, Frederick County, Md. On this beautiful farm these parents lived, reared a large family, acquired very considerable property, died and now lie buried. They had seven sons and four daughters, one daughter dying in infancy. Every one of the ten grew to maturity, married and raised families. Following is the list, some of the dates appearing having been secured by long continued effort.

**Family Record of**

Christian Easterday and Julia Blessing, married in Germany, probably in Saxony, about 1750.

---

Christian Easterday, born in Virginia November 27, 1752, died in Frederick County, Maryland, May 28, 1835.

Lewis Easterday, second son, born in Frederick County, Maryland, died probably in Kentucky, dates unknown.

Daniel Easterday, third son, born in Frederick County, Maryland, November 12, 1762, died in Georgetown, D. C., September 25, 1833.

Comrad Easterday, fourth son, born in Frederick County, Maryland, March 4, 1769, died in same place October 14, 1825.

Francis Easterday, fifth son, born in Frederick County, Maryland, July 18, 1770, died in same place December 3, 1841.

Jacob Easterday, sixth son, born in Frederick County, Maryland, November 20, 1772, died in same place August 30, 1840.

Abraham Easterday, seventh son, born in Frederick County, Maryland, March 20, 1777, died in same place December 30, 1823.

Catherine (Tabler), born in Frederick County, Maryland, place of death and dates unknown.

Phoebe (Tabler), born in Frederick County, Maryland, place of death and dates unknown.

Julia (Blessing), born in Frederick County, Maryland, May 30, 1765, died probably in same place October 3, 1824.

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The order in which the one son and two daughters with unknown birth days came in the list the writer has not been able to determine. Probably they all came in the ten years between Christian and Daniel. Certainly the second son came in this space. Very probably Abraham was the youngest child, he having been twenty-four years and four months younger than the oldest child. It may here be noted that the father died November 15, 1805, and the mother December 5, 1804. The birth years of these grand old fruitful pioneers are unknown to the writer, but may now be guessed at by the reader.



**Quotations From Letters.**

Judge Joseph Easterday, the son of Jacob of the foregoing list of seven brothers, at the age of fifty years, under date of March 10, 1864, from his home near the old farm with its famous spring, wrote as follows: "My grandfather's name was Christian Easterday. He emigrated to this country from Germany before the Revolution and settled on the Holston River between North Carolina and Tennessee. He must have come in a ship bound south. The Indian troubles compelled him to come further east, and he settled in this county when Maryland was a province under King George the Third, and accumulated a fortune before he died. He was a man of energy and enterprise and of a good education in the German language. He had seven sons and three daughters. Two daughters married in this county, the other in Virginia, near Martinsburg. All are now dead. Lewis emigrated to Gallatin County, Kentucky, and certainly has grandchildren living. My father's name was Jacob. He died in 1840, and I own a portion of his land. My grandfather died in 1805. They are all interred in the family cemetery."

Kate A. Easterday, a maiden lady of fifty-eight years, whose father's name was Conrad, and whose grandfather's name was Conrad of the foregoing list of seven brothers, under date of March 18, 1884, Ellerton, Frederick County, Maryland, not far from Myersville, in the northern part of Middletown Valley, wrote as follows: "My great grandfather, Christian Easterday, married Miss Julia Blessing in the Kingdom of Saxony, and started on a wedding tour for America. The exact date I do not know. They landed safely in Virginia. There they settled three times, and every time the Indians routed them and put them to flight. They were compelled to leave some of their property. How long they lived in Virginia I do not know, but their first child was born in Virginia. The last time they were routed the Indians compelled great-grandfather to turn his own grinstone to grind their tomahawks. They took horses and what few things they could get and fled for Maryland. Great grandmother rode horseback and carried her son, Christian, on her lap. Nine miles below or east of

Harper's Ferry they crossed the Potomac River into Maryland, which they found a vast, howling forest uninhabited. After they crossed the river they travelled six miles due north, and came to a never-failing spring of water. There they stopped, lived and died and were buried. They arrived there in the spring of the year and in the evening of the day. They ate their supper and spread their bed on the ground under an oak tree. Tired and weary they lay down to rest. In the morning they rose refreshed and encouraged and viewed their home. That home was in our now beautiful, fertile, famous Middletown Valley. Great grandfather Easterday built the first house that was built in Middletown Valley. This was prior to the year 1748, in which year Frederick county was organized. At the same time and place that Christian Easterday married Julia Blessing, George Blessing married Julia Easterday. Julia Easterday was great grandfather's sister and George Blessing was great grandmother's brother. They emigrated together. Shortly after great grandfather Easterday settled in Maryland, great uncle Blessing settled near by him. Hence the Blessings and Easterdays are all related."

#### Who the Writers Quoted Are.

Judge Joseph Easterday was born in 1814 and died in 1882. He was a grandson of the Senior Christian Easterday, who died in 1805. His letters indicate that he was a scholarly man. In the early part of 1864 the writer noticed the name of Rachel A. Easterday as a subscriber to the Lutheran Observer, and applied to her for Easterday history. In response she wrote a beautiful letter in a beautiful hand. In it she said: "Father will write and give you the history of his family from the time they emigrated to this country from Germany, which is, I think, very interesting. My father has filled several public offices, such as Judge of the Orphan's Court, District Judge, etc. Consequently he goes by the familiar name of Judge Easterday." Her letter was dated March 10, 1864. Her father, Judge Joseph Easterday, under the same date, wrote the letter from which the foregoing quotation is made.

Kate A. Easterday was born in 1826 and died in 1884,

less than four months after the date of her letter. She was a great granddaughter of the Senior Christian Easterday. She had been mentioned to the writer as everybody's "Aunt Kate" who knew everything from away back.

### The Quotations Discussed.

The testimony of the two witnesses is very valuable, and yet there are discrepancies. These, however, are not great, and they show that the witnesses were not in collusion. The information reached them by tradition and orally, but the facts as to when and where are established in a manner very satisfactory to one who has long puzzled over them.

Joseph Easterday refers to the Holston River between North Carolina and Tennessee, and Kate Easterday refers only to Virginia as the first location of the Easterday family. Now the Holston River flows southwest through the northeastern part of Tennessee, emptying into the Tennessee River. Its three branches, the North Fork, the Middle Fork and the South Fork, all take their start in southwestern Virginia, from about twenty to fifty miles north and slightly east of the northeast corner of Tennessee and the northwest corner of North Carolina, no part of them apparently passing within fifteen miles of North Carolina. Considering then the Holston River, mentioned by Judge Joseph, and Virginia, mentioned by Kate A., we conclude that the first location was probably in southwest Virginia, about forty miles northeast of the adjoining north corners of North Carolina and Tennessee, and in or near that which is now Bland County, Virginia.

Again, Joseph E. refers to their settlement in Maryland when that was a province under King George the Third. Now the thirty-three years reign of George the Second ended in 1760 and the sixty years reign of George the Third began in 1760. Kate E. says they reached Maryland with their infant son before the year 1848. This son, however, was born in 1752. The probability is that Joseph got his Georges mixed, and that 1753 or 1754 is near the date of the Easterday entry into Maryland.

It may seem that their first location for so early a date

was far from the Atlantic. Let it be remembered that Jamestown had then been in existence over 140 years, and a western movement of less than two miles a year would cover the case. Also let it be remembered that the Jamestown end of the Chesapeake bay was much more easily reached by a European vessel than was the Baltimore end. Hence, the reference of Joseph E. to the ship bound south is not fully appreciated.

### **The Easterday Grave Yard.**

The following is quoted from Kate A. Easterday's letter:

"There is a beautiful stream of water flowing through the entire length of our valley called the Cotoctin Creek. The Easterday family grave yard is on the east of the creek; and the Blessing grave yard on the west of the creek. Both are on a hill, and not a quarter of a mile apart. There is also a grave yard there where they buried their colored people."

"All the seven brothers but two owned farms, married, lived, died and were buried in the Middletown Valley. These are Christian, Conrad, Jacob, Francis and Abraham. They were all buried with their parents in the Easterday grave yard on great grandfather's home farm. Lewis died in the west. Daniel died in Georgetown, D. C."

"Ten years ago (in 1874) my uncle Lewis took me to the Easterday grave yard. It is near the spot where my great grandparents lodged the first night they lived in Maryland. Great grandfather and mother lived to old age. The time of their death is on their tomb stones, but not their ages. Great grandfather Christian died Nov. 15, 1805, and great grandmother Julia died Dec. 5, 1804. Their oldest son, Christian, lies close beside them. I cannot describe my feelings at that time. My eyes overflowed, my heart welled up with emotion. I could not help but bow upon their graves and pray, 'Oh Lord, Thy Will be Done.' The graves are all visible and have plain marble slab tomb stones. It was snowing or I would have taken a copy of the inscriptions. The date of the birth of great uncle Christian is on his tomb stone. If I live and can, I will again go to the cemetery of my ancestors and take a registry from the tomb stones." This dear Aunt Kate Easterday died in less than four months after writing the above.

### The Writer's Visit to the Easterday Grave Yard.

The writer visited this most interesting Easterday grave yard in October, 1903, and he heartily sympathized with the tender feelings of the dear old maiden Kate, experienced by her twenty-nine years before. He then made a complete list of the inscriptions on the tombstones. He noted that, if Kate A. had read the 1852 as the birth year of the Virginia born Christian, she would not have put him into Maryland as a baby boy prior to 1848.

But what a wonderful thing is here! Parents and five sons (with the wives of some of them) all fathers of families, all buried in a plat less than fifty feet square! The first death indicated by the inscriptions was that of the mother, who died Dec. 5, 1804; the second was that of the father, who died Nov. 15, 1805, less than six years after the death of George Washington; and the last was that of Francis, who died Dec. 3, 1841, and was buried by Rev. Dr. S. W. Harkey, who in later years became the dear old friend and teacher of the writer at Springfield, Ill. Under date of May 3, 1864, Rachel A. Easterday wrote: "The Mr. Easterday that Dr. Harkey had reference to when he spoke of preaching a funeral sermon, was not my grandfather, Jacob, but a brother of his, Francis Easterday." Francis was the grandfather of George E. Easterday, who now resides one and a half miles southeast of this cemetery and who delightfully entertained and accompanied the writer at the time of his visit to this interesting and sacred locality four years ago. This George Easterday was a little less than three years of age at the time of the funeral of his grandfather, Francis, and he fancies that he retains a dim recollection of being at the grave yard on that occasion.

At the time of this visit the writer also stood reverently at the grave of Judge Joseph Easterday at the Lutheran church in Jefferson, and at the grave of Kate A. Easterday at St. John's Lutheran church, about two miles north of Myersville, on Church Hill. The former had then been at rest twenty-one years, and the latter nineteen years.

The location of the Easterday grave yard, so fundamental

in this history, is in Frederick county, Maryland, about half a mile southwest of the old Easterday home by the spring, about one and a half miles west of Jefferson, about nine miles west of Frederick City, about twelve miles northeast of Harper's Ferry and about twenty-five miles southeast of Hagerstown.

### **The Bible, Education and Religion.**

Kate A. Easterday wrote further: "Great grandfather Easterday is said to have been a short, stout, heavy man, his head was very white and he was very old before he died. He gave all his children an education. I had the Bible that he brought with him from Saxony. We kept it in a chest with other German books upstairs, and one day mother's grandchildren were playing, and took those books to play with, and they tore up the Bible that we were keeping for a precious and holy relic. The loss of it has been a source of great grief to me. That Bible was the first and, for a time, the only Bible in Frederick county, and it was used and studied a great deal. Great grandparents worshipped the Triune God and taught their children the precepts of the Bible. My ancestors were Lutherans, and the greater part of the Easterdays were and are Lutherans."

Joseph Easterday wrote further: "You say you are proud of the name Easterday. Well you may be. I glory in my name. The word Easterday, as you know, is derived from the German Oasterdock, meaning the day of the resurrection of Jesus from the Grave—that name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease. Who that would not love the name? Who so base as to bring that name into disrepute? The Easterdays in our country are all Lutherans and love their church."

### **The Will of Christian Easterday, Senr.**

In the name of God Amen I Christian Osterday Senr. of Frederick County & State of Maryland being in perfect health of body and of sound and disposing mind memory and understanding considering the certainty of death and the uncer-

tainty of the time thereof and being desirous to settle my worldly affairs and thereby be the better to leave this world when it shall please God to call me hence do hereby make and publish this my last will and testament in manner and form following that is to say:

First and Principally I commit my soul into the hands of Almighty God and my body to the earth to be decently buried at the discretion of my executors hereinafter mentioned and after my debts and funeral charges are paid I devise and bequeath as follows:

1.—Item I devise and bequeath that the part of the tract where I now live laying on the south side of the road leading from Fredericktown to Harpers Ferry and that field on the north side of the above road where the new tobacco house stands be sold to the highest bidders provided no stranger be allowed to bid but the family shall buy the above mentioned tract of land among themselves——

2.—Item I devise and bequeath that all my slaves shall be sold in the same manner as the above mentioned tract or parcel of land——

3.—Item I devise and bequeath that the house clock be sold as the land and the negroes above mentioned——

4.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Francis Osterday all that part of the tract of land on which I now live lying on the north side of the road leading from Fredericktown to Harpers Ferry—except that field where the new tobacco house stands to him & his heirs forever and also fifty pound current money of Maryland to be paid him by my executors hereinafter mentioned in two equal annual payments——

5.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Conrad Osterday the tract of land he now lives on as divided between him and my son Christian Osterday provided he pay to my executors fifty pound Current money in two annual payments without interest to him and his heirs forever——

6.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Jacob Osterday all that tract or parcel of land which I bought of Beler to him and his heirs forever and fifty pound current money to be paid

him in two annual payments without interest.

7.—Item I devise and bequeath that the purchaser of the land ordered to be sold shall pay the money in three annual payments without interest——

8.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Daniel Osterday two hundred pounds current money to be paid him in three annual payments without interest.

9.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Lewis Osterday two hundred pounds current money to be paid him in three annual payments without interest——

10.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Abraham Osterday two hundred pounds current money to be paid him in three annual payments without interest——

11.—Item I devise and bequeath to my daughter Catherine Tabler two hundred pound current money to be paid her in three annual payments without interest——

12.—Item I devise and bequeath to my daughter Phebe Tabler two hundred pound current money to be paid her in three annual payments without interest——

13.—Item I devise and bequeath to my daughter Julia Blessing two hundred pound current money to be paid her in three annual payments without interest——

14.—Item I devise and bequeath to my grandson Adam Tabler twelve pound current money——

15.—Item I devise and bequeath to my grandson William Tabler twelve pound current money——

16.—Item I devise and bequeath to my son Christian Osterday one shilling sterling——

17.—Item I devise and bequeath that my executors shall sell my house and lot in Georgetown upon the following terms to-wit, one third of the purchase money to be paid upon the day of sale and the balance to be paid in two annual payments with interest from the day of sale and I hereby authorize and empower my executors to convey the above mentioned lot to the purchaser or any other real property ordered to be sold by this testament——

18.—Item I devise and bequeath my wearing apparel to be equally divided between my following children, viz. Chris-



tian Osterday, Francis Osterday, Jacob Osterday, Conrad Osterday, Lewis Osterday, Daniel Osterday and Abraham Osterday share and share alike——

19.—Item I devise and bequeath to my three daughters Catherine Tabler, Phebe Tabler & Julia Blessing all my **chitchon** furniture to be equally divided share and share alike——

20.—Item I devise and bequeath to my daughter Phebe Tabler one bed and furniture——

21.—Item I devise and bequeath to my daughter Julia Blessing one bed and furniture——

22.—Item I will and devise that there be no quarreling among my children after my death but that they may settle with my executors amicably or without lawsuits——

23.—Item I devise and bequeath that the remainder of my estate real and personal be equally divided among my seven following children, viz. Lewis Osterday, Jacob Osterday, Francis Osterday, Abraham Osterday, Catherine Tabler, Phebe Tabler and Julia Blessing share and share alike——

24.—And lastly I do hereby constitute and appoint William Tabler, Christian Osterday and Jacob Osterday executors of this my last will and testament revoking and annulling all former wills by me heretofore made ratifying and confirming this and none other to be my last will and testament. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affix my seal this 29th day of October Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and four——

CHRISTIAN OSTERDAY. (Seal.)

Signed, sealed, published and declared by Christian Osterday Senr. the above named testator as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us who at his request and in his presence have subscribed our names as witnesses thereto——

JESSE MATHIEWS  
THEODORE MITCHELL  
THOMAS HAWKINS.

True copy Test:

(Signed) CHAS. E. SAYLOR  
Register of Wills for Frederick County.

### A Study of the Will.

This is a most interesting document. It is the will of a Christian gentleman. In it an aged man, twelve and a half months before his death, gives evidence of remarkable soundness of mind. A hard working, careful, thrifty, Christian man had reared a large family and accumulated very considerable property. Every one of the seven sons and three daughters is mentioned in the will. Thus all were known to be living some years after the parents had passed their golden wedding anniversary. Each is remembered kindly, all are exhorted tenderly by the grand old man.

The items are numbered for the convenience of the writer. Nos. 1, 2 and 3 provide that no stranger shall be allowed to disturb in the bidding on property of the estate and that the old clock and the slaves shall be kept among those who would properly care for them. The following quotation from Rachel A. Easterday's letter of May 3, 1864, may here be admitted: "Grandfather Jacob Easterday was, in his life time, a large slaveholder. Father, too, has owned eight or ten, but we have only four left. We have one old servant named Harry who belonged to my great grandfather, Christian Easterday. He speaks the German language very well, as it was taught him by his old master, and I believe he says his prayers in German. Is not he a perfect wonder?"

No. 4 refers to the bequest of the old home farm to his son Francis. This includes the field in which the old graveyard now is, and in which the grave of Francis seems to have been the last one made. As noted before, Francis was the grandfather of George E. Easterday now residing one and a half miles southeast of this place.

No. 6 refers to the bequest of land to his son, Jacob, who was the father of Judge Joseph E. The Judge's letter states that he owned a portion of his father's land.

Nos. 8, 9 and 10 are bequests in money alone. Daniel had gone to Georgetown, Lewis had gone west to Gallatin county, Kentucky, and Abraham is said to have "kept a tavern near Fredericktown." It may be noted that 200 pounds was nearly \$1000.

A disposition to be equitable appears strikingly in Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. In this connection note also 19, 20 and 21. Catherine evidently was not in need of an additional bed.

No. 17 refers to property in Georgetown originally purchased, no doubt, through the influence of the son Daniel, who later purchased the same from the estate.

No. 18 is interesting. Every one of the seven sons is named. The articles of wearing apparel must have been rather numerous and of value. It has been remarkable to the writer that the listings of the seven sons never follow the same order. However, Christian invariably stands first and Abraham last. The daughters usually appear in the order Catherine (Tabler), Phebe (Tabler) and Julia (Blessing).

No. 16 shows that Christian was not overlooked. He is referred to incidentally in No. 5. He had doubtless been equitably provided for previously. That no slight was intended by the bequest of one shilling is evidenced by the fact that he was appointed one of the executors of the will.

The grandsons, Adam and William Tabler, referred to in Nos. 14 and 15, are either brothers or cousins, the sons of Catherine or Phebe or both.

No. 24 constitutes as executors of the will, William Tabler, Christian Easterday and Jacob Easterday. The writer has as yet learned nothing of the Tabler families, and he wonders who is this William Tabler heading the list? Christian was then fifty-two years of age.

The grandson, William, named in No. 15, was comparatively young. However, if his mother was born in the early part of the space between 1752 and 1762, formerly referred to, he might have been thirty years of age at that time. It is also possible that one of the sons-in-law of the maker of this will was William Tabler.

From our record of dates it appears that the aged wife, unmentioned in this will, was yet alive, living, however, only five weeks after its execution. It may be noted that the men-

tioning of her name might have complicated the settlement of the estate, and the husband had no fear in regard to her care in the possible event of her outliving him.

The writer is as yet unable to account for the peculiar spelling of the name in this will. In answer to inquiry the commissioner of the Maryland land office at Annapolis, under date of April 29, 1902, wrote the following: "We find but one grant between 1680 and 1800—'**Good Luck**', patented to Christian Easterday, May 16, 1760, lying in Frederick county on the side of a hill on Killowkin Creek, near the wagon road to Harper's Ferry." This furnishes conclusive evidence of the full translation of the name more than forty-four years before the will was made. Aside from this, the record presents an interesting description of a tract of land.

In answer to the writer's inquiry the following written under date of Frederick, Maryland, Dec. 16, 1907, by Wm. B. Cutshall, Reg. Wills, has been received: "Your copy seems to be correct. As to the executors, he does not describe them as sons or grandsons. He just names them as executors. The will is written in English, but signed in German, Christian Osterday."

A most fitting and suggestive ending of the discussion of this interesting will is found in No. 22, which begins: "I will and devise that there be no quarreling among my children after my death."

### **Early History of Martin Easterday and His Family.**

It is with a tinge of regret that the writer must now turn somewhat from the story of the family of the Senior Christian Easterday in order to trace his own immediate ancestry. This comes down through Senior Martin Easterday, a brother of Christian.

In some manner communication seems to have been kept up between the brothers, Christian in Maryland and Martin in Germany, during the few years after Christian's coming, and Martin was induced to follow. Christian with his bride came about the year 1750. Martin with a small family of little children came about the year 1760. In both families the

first born son was named after his father. Martin Easterday, Jr., was the great grandfather of the writer.

A story goes that this Martin, all through his life, could remember how the passengers of the vessel teased him on the long trip by tramping upon his toes. The tomb stone of Martin Easterday, Jr., in the cemetery of the Lutheran church of Bowling Green, Jefferson County, Ohio, frequently visited by the writer, indicates that he died on Dec. 11, 1840, at the age of 84 years, 1 month and 25 days, having been born in Germany, therefore, on October 16, 1756 (N. S.) The assumption that the long trip was made in 1760 would make his age at that time about four years. From such age he might remember the teasing referred to.

Compare for a moment these first born sons and first cousins. Christian was born in Virginia in 1752. Martin was born in Germany in 1756. From 1760 for thirty-six years, as single and married men, they lived neighbors in Frederick County, Maryland. In 1835, at the age of 82 1-2, Christian was buried in Maryland. In 1840, at the age of 84, Martin was buried in eastern Ohio. Very probably, however, Christian, Sr., was older than Martin, Sr., and presumably their father, who lived and died in Germany, bore the name of Christian. As noted before, the names Christian and Martin have always been favorites in the family.

A moment's return must be made in order to note the interesting circumstances attending the landing of the little Easterday family from the vessel at Baltimore. For some reason they found themselves unable to pay their fare and keeping during the long voyage now at its end. According to a custom then prevailing vessel passengers were subject to be sold into bondage for the sum required, the bondages to last till the purchaser might be amply remunerated by the services of the parties purchased. Martin's brother, Christian, who in later life exhibited so much of greatness and goodness, came to the rescue. He satisfied the master of the vessel, and the loving families held a delightful reunion at the new, but fruitful, Easterday farm in Frederick County, Maryland. The foregoing story had been handed down orally through the

Martin Easterday family. It came to the writer in rather a misty form, and he has sought eagerly for its confirmation by the Christian Easterday family. We will hear again from our two valuable witnesses.

### Quotations from Letters.

Judge Joseph Easterday, under date of March 10, 1864, wrote: "I am of the opinion that you are a descendant of a brother of my grandfather, Christian. I have noticed your name in the Lutheran almanac, and in the list of graduates in Springfield, Ill., in which the name of your brother also appeared, and was at a loss to know the relation that existed. But we are relatives, for my father in his lifetime corresponded with a Martin Easterday, then residing in Ohio, and said he was a relative of his. I was then but a boy. I am now fifty years of age." These correspondents were Jacob and Martin, first cousins, both of whom died in 1840, the former being Joseph's father, the latter being the writer's great grandfather.

Kate A. Easterday, under date of March 18, 1884, wrote: "After some years a brother of great grandfather and his wife emigrated here too. He went to Kentucky. I have almost forgotten his name.. I think it was Lewis, but I may be mistaken. Perhaps I can find out what his name was. Father has a sister living yet, the only surviving one of father's brothers and sisters. Her name is Mary Easterday Maught. She is in her 92nd year." This Mary Maught was the daughter of Conrad of the seven brothers. She was born Nov. 1, 1792, thirteen years before her grandfather, Christian Easterday, Sr., died. In the above Kate Easterday got the brother mixed with the son, Lewis, who went to Kentucky.

In the same letter Kate Easterday wrote further of the coming of this brother and his wife: "They went from Saxony over to England, and there they paid their fare to America. After a long, perilous and dangerous voyage, they arrived at Baltimore, Maryland. On their way to America they were robbed of all they had, and when they arrived here the ship-master demanded that they pay their fare again or be sold into

slavery. Great grandfather Christian paid their fare and redeemed them. They had a rough and tough reception when they first got here. I have been told that great grandfather and great uncle Blessing both had a considerable sum of money."

Again, under date of April 21, 1884, Kate wrote: "I think I can correct a mistake I made in my last letter. Ten years ago I spent a week with Aunt Maught and then she told me that the name of the great uncle who was redeemed by her grandfather at Baltimore was Martin. I told it when I came home, and my brother John says he remembers me telling that Aunt Maught said his name was Martin. Aunt says that her great uncle had three sons and she thinks two daughters, but she is not certain about the daughters, and that the name of one of his sons was Martin. She says she was twelve or thirteen years old when her grandfather, Christian Easterday, died."

"Aunt Kate's" report is very pretty, but another story comes floating through the mist along the Martin family line, which should not be overlooked. It is that the Senior Christian, being the oldest son, inherited all his father's property, coming to America with considerable wealth. Needing assistance in his early undertakings, he negotiated with his less favored brother, Martin, who came to Baltimore with his little family and was formally purchased into bondage by his brother, according to previous agreement. It is further related that the debt was fully paid in labor, Martin, Jr., about four years old on their arrival, remembering himself to have aided in completing the burdensome contract. The following comes down as a literal quotation from this Martin, Jr., the writer's great grandfather: "Boys, you need not look to Germany for a fortune, for your ancestor was sold to pay his passage to America." Now the writer, as a representative of the Martin branch of the family, siezes upon this opportunity to express gratitude to the Christian branch for favors received, and also to remind them that the debt has been paid in hard and faithful labor and the account balanced. It is hereby admitted, however, that, in case of the Senior Martin Easterday, evidence is wanting as to his ever owning slaves or his ever executing a will.

**Family Record of**

Martin Easterday and wife, maiden name unknown, married in Germany about 1755.

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Martin Easterday, born in Germany October 16, 1756, N. S., died December 11, 1840, buried in Bowling Green Cemetery, Jefferson County, Ohio.

George Easterday, born in Frederick County, Maryland, about 1765, died in 1850, buried in Chester Church Cemetery, two and a half miles south of Chesterville, Morrow County, Ohio.

Jacob Easterday, born in Frederick County, Maryland, in 1774, died December 31, 1824, buried at Bowerstown, Harrison County, Ohio.

Margaret (Eberhart), born in Germany before 1760, or in Frederick County, Maryland, after 1760, died, date and place unknown.

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The dates of the births and the dates of the deaths and the places of burial of the parents are unknown to the writer. He especially regrets that he has been unable to locate the grave of the Senior Martin Easterday. For many years he was within ready reach of his grandfather, Christian, who was the grandson of the Senior Martin, and the son of the Junior Martin, but he neglected to secure that which is now so desired and so out of reach.

**The Homes of the Martin Easterday Family.**

Carroll's Manor is named traditionally as the Maryland home of this family. Its location is a short distance southeast of the old Christian Easterday home, and in the lower part of Frederick Valley, which joins Middletown Valley on the east. The family seems to have resided at or near this place from the time of their arrival, about 1760, to about the year 1796. Quite probably the parents died and were buried at this place



near the close of the period of the thirty-six years of the family's residence in Frederick county.

Martin Easterday, Jr., who is known to have been a bright, active, strong man, both mentally and physically, seems now to have become the natural and recognized leader of the family. About the year 1783 he married Barbara Bauer, probably changed later to Bower and Bowers. Under his leadership all the descendants of his parents and part of the Bowers family are understood to have removed from Maryland to Red Stone, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, on the Monongahela River, about sixty miles south of Pittsburg, in the year 1796. They seem to have been preceded by members of the Bowers family. In the spring of 1800 apparently the same company, with Martin as their leader, in the hope of bettering their condition, placed their goods upon a flat boat, floated down the Mononghela to Pittsburg, then down the Ohio River landing at a point a few miles above Steubenville, Jefferson County, Ohio. This trip ante dates steamboat travel by more than ten years, and Steubenville could not then claim an age greater than three years.

### **The Ohio Easterday Home.**

Pushing his way westward from the Ohio River through a wild, dense forest, Martin, Jr., found his ideal location. This is about five miles from the river, about one miles west of that which sixteen years later became Knoxville, and two miles east of that which is now known as Bowling Green, all in Jefferson County, Ohio. It may be noted that, for many years, Osage has been the name of the postoffice at the latter place. Here Martin Easterday lodged and made his home on a beautiful plat of land at the side of a grand old spring of water. Here for forty years he lived and thrived and here he died. At this place in a most remarkable manner Martin, Jr., duplicated the experience of his uncle Christian in Maryland. This lasted more than forty years and that more than fifty. The interesting periods lapped over each other from the spring of 1800 to the fall of 1805. The distance east and west between the places is about one hundred and eighty miles.

The dear old Ohio Easterday farm and spring and "sugar camp" the writer will never forget. The writer's father, Daniel, labored much upon this farm for his grandfather, Martin. His father, Christian, the oldest son of Martin, resided on this farm for several years after the death of his father. The writer, born three miles distant from this place, and one year before the death of this his German born great grandfather, thus received his earliest and most delightful impressions of the new world into which he had been ushered when, under the protection of his parents, he visited the old "sugar camp." Why, then, should he not repeat his visit to this dear old place at every opportunity?

Those who came to Ohio with Martin Easterday located at convenient distances from this place. The Penna. home was about one hundred and twenty miles west and somewhat north of the Maryland home, and the Ohio home was about sixty miles, in a straight line, northwest of the Penna. home. The distance by boat, north to Pittsburg from Red Stone, and southwest from Pittsburg to their landing place, was nearly one hundred and fifty miles.

### A Letter Quotation.

Elias S. Easterday, of Nokomis, Ill., is the youngest brother of the writer's father. After he secured a home of his own his parents continued to live with him. Following are quotations from letters written by him in 1902, responding to questions put to him by the writer: "I lived with my parents over forty years, and I heard some things repeated one hundred times. One was that our folks came to Jefferson County in April, 1800. Another was that my grandfather, (Martin Easterday, Jr.,) lived on Carroll's Manor, Maryland, and from there he went to Red Stone, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, where he lived three years and a half. Red Stone is a creek where my grandmother's brother, Joe Bowers, had a mill. I do not think Martin Easterday, Sr., ever left Maryland. The Easterdays went to Red Stone because some of the Bowers people were there. There were probably three families in the same boat coming from Pennsylvania. I have heard my father

say what one of his uncles, George or Jacob, did when one of the sheep jumped overboard when they were landing the boat. Grandfather (Martin, Jr.) had a wagon, but he could not use it to haul his goods out from the Ohio River, as there was no road. So they took two poles and made shafts for each horse, letting the poles extend some distance behind. On these they pinned cross pieces. On these slides they hauled all their goods about five miles. As it was then planting time they could not stop to build a house, but built a camp—a three-walled shack with one side open and a fire in front. Then they went to clearing ground for corn, flax, etc. After it was too late to plant they built their first cabin. Then grandfather went back to Red Stone to harvest a crop of wheat he left there. When winter came grandfather again went back to thresh his wheat. After that he had it ground and brought the flour down the river with him.”

### **A Short Study of the Fourteen.**

It now appears that at the beginning of the 19th century most of the seven sons and three daughters of Christian Easterday, Sr., were still residing in Maryland. Three sons and one daughter of Martin Easterday, Sr., were residing in eastern Ohio. These fourteen were all born between the years 1750 and 1780, one or two having been born in Germany, one in Virginia, and at least eleven in Frederick County, Maryland. And all the fourteen seem to have died between the years 1820 and 1850. No name in the two families of children is repeated except that of Jacob. It may here be stated that Jacob, the son of Martin, Sr., married, but died childless. In following generations several names have been frequently repeated, greatly increasing the chances for confusion in tracing the history of the family. Notably among these are Christian, Martin, Daniel, David, George, Conrad, John, Jacob and Lewis. Note that the ten children of Christian E., Sr., and the four children of Martin E., Sr., are first cousins. The children of these respectively are second cousins. The children's children are third cousins, and so on, thus connecting children only of the same generation. To aid in avoiding confusion, the child-

ren of Christian E., Sr., will be referred to as "the seven brothers" and "the three sisters," and the children of Martin E., Sr., will be referred to as "the three brothers" and "the one sister," and the children of both Christian, Sr., and Martin, Sr., will be referred to as "the fourteen children."

### Connecting Visits.

In 1884 the writer addressed the following to Kate A. Easterday, Frederick County, Maryland: "My father, Daniel Easterday, tells me that in 1823 when he was a boy ten years old and plowing for his grandfather, Martin, in eastern Ohio, a Conrad Easterday came from Maryland to visit his cousin, Martin Easterday. He says that this Conrad and his grandfather came out to the field where he was at work, and he heard them speak of being cousins. He thinks his grandfather was then about sixty-three years old, and that the visiting cousin was considerably younger. He says his grandfather was about six feet tall, and Conrad was shorter. Now was this Conrad your father or your grandfather? Does your Aunt Mary Maught remember that her father visited relatives in Ohio when she was about thirty years old? Or was it her brother, your father, Conrad? If she remembers, can she tell how this Conrad was related to the Ohio Easterday?"

Before quoting from the response of Kate A., the writer may state that he did not then understand the relationship as he does now. He was then feeling for facts many of which he has since grasped with certainty. The reader may now aid in reconciling the personality of the visitor and the date of the visit. In 1823 Martin, Sr., was sixty-seven instead of sixty-three, and Conrad Easterday, the cousin, was 54. Conrad, the son of Conrad of the seven brothers, was twenty-six in that year.

Kate A. answers: "Aunt Mary Maught says her father never went west, but my father, her brother Conrad, went west in 1820 or 1821 to see his uncle Lewis Easterday and he also went to Ohio to see relatives. She says my father was a bachelor and went alone. My father, Conrad Easterday, was born Jan. 22, 1797. I remember very well my father telling about

his visit to Ohio and Kentucky. He related many instances about his travels. He rode all the way horseback. He rode whole days through woods thickly timbered and no road. Many nights he could hardly get a place to lodge. After father returned from the west he bought a farm and moved on it and kept bachelor's hall nearly two years. He got married March 22, 1823."

Now for the study. The cousin must have been the son of a cousin. The writer's father, Daniel, born Oct. 19, 1813, must have plowed at the age of eight years. Conrad, Jr., the bachelor visitor was only 24. The name and time are now satisfactorily settled. To the boy of eight the rough rider of twenty-four may have seemed the bachelor of considerable age as the scene in the field was recalled sixty-three years later.

The writer is of the opinion that this was the last visit between representatives of the two original families when the exact relationship was understood by the participating parties until the writer, of the family of Martin, visited with members of the family of Christian near the old Maryland home in 1903. The exact relationship then existing between the visitor and the visited was known to the visitor and gracefully accepted by the visited. This visit the writer will ever remember with very great pleasure. The visit of Conrad to Ohio in 1821, which was witnessed by the writer's father, was thus returned by the writer eighty-two years later, and the members of the two branches of the family are again "on speaking terms."

### Connecting Correspondence.

The following is quoted from a letter from Kate A. Easterday, written in 1884: "Thirty years ago a young Easterday that was a school teacher in Illinois corresponded with me for a while. He and his parents were born in Ohio. He gave me the names of his parents and ancestors, but I have almost forgotten how they run. Perhaps he was one of your father's brothers. His mother's first name was Anne Maria."

The writer can discuss this with assurance. The Illinois school teacher was the writer's uncle Martin. The time was the winter of 1851 and 1852, thirty-two years before the date

of the letter quoted. The teacher was born in Ohio but his parents were not. The date of his birth was Aug. 29, 1825. He is now spending the evening of his life at Steilacoom, Wash., by the side of Puget Sound. This Martin was twenty-seven years of age and Kate A. was twenty-six years of age at the time of the correspondence. Their grandfathers were first cousins, but they then had no correct idea of the relationship existing between them.

Probably the next correspondence between representatives of the original families was that of 1864, between the writer and Rachel A. Easterday and her father, Judge Joseph Easterday. The tracing of the relationship here began to take shape. Then followed a brief but pleasant correspondence in 1869 with Milton Easterday, now dead, then a student of Selin's Grove, Pennsylvania, and a brother of George E. Easterday, who entertained the writer in 1903. The next leap was into the year 1884, when the extended correspondence with Kate A. Easterday occurred just before her death. Some inaccuracies in her answers have appeared, but her letters are of great value. In all they consist of eighteen pages of letter paper very closely written. These letters very largely have been responses to questions asked by the writer, and, therefore, they are very disconnected, and now rather difficult to decipher. Quotations have been made freely from them, and there are more to follow. It was after the correspondence was commenced with her that the story of the Easterday family in America was fully figured out. Very many additional letters having to do with the latter history are in hand, but the earlier facts presented or confirmed by Kate A. Easterday just before her death, if lost, could never be regained.

### **The Blessing Connection.**

Kate A. Easterday stated: "If you are of our race of Easterdays, you are part Blessing. Aunt Susan Easterday Blessing, one of father's sisters, (who was born Aug. 9, 1802), died Feb. 3, 1884, about six weeks ago, in the eighty-second year of her age."

Kate is wrong in her first statement here. The descen-

dants of Martin Easterday, Sr., are not part Blessing, but they are related to all the Blessings because all the Blessings are part Easterday. This for the reason that the wife of the Senior Blessing was Julia Easterday. It is true that all the descendants of Christian Easterday are part Blessing, for the reason that his wife was Julia Blessing.

The husband of Aunt Susan Easterday Blessing referred to above by Kate was George Blessing, who was born Feb. 15, 1794, and died Dec. 17, 1873. Because of very heroic acts performed by him in defense of his neighborhood at the time of our civil war this George Blessing became well known in the last ten years of his life as the "Hero of the Highlands." The Highlands are at the northern end of the Middletown Valley.

The earlier intermingling of the Blessing and Christian Easterday families by marriage has been a matter of tradition and comment. It is a remarkable fact that the fathers of the George and the Susan, above referred to, each married the sister of the other. Thus George Blessing and Susan Easterday were doubly first cousins before their marriage, the father of Susan being Conrad of "the seven brothers," and the mother of George being Julia of "the three sisters." The maiden name of Susan's mother was Barbara Blessing. The first name of George's father is unknown to the writer. The only honor claimed by the writer in this connection is that his grandfather, Christian, and the "Hero of the Highlands" were second cousins, the grandfather of the one and the grandmother of the other being brother and sister.

### **Patriotism.**

It may here be noted that in 1776 the oldest of "the seven brothers" was twenty-four years of age and the oldest of "the three brothers" was twenty years of age, but the writer has been unable to find evidence of record indicating that any one of the name was in active military service during the Revolutionary War. It is known, however, that to Martin of "the three brothers" was applied a military title by his neighbors in eastern Ohio. That all were loyal, patriotic, law-abiding

and peace-loving from their earliest history has never been questioned.

### **The Closing of Part First of Easterday History.**

That which may be considered as Part First of this history has been prepared by very great effort on the part of the writer. Many conflicting statements have been presented for his consideration. The larger number of these have been disposed of with ease. Many have been very puzzling. Some have furnished amusement. Among the latter is a statement of a grandson of one of "the seven brothers" to the effect that his grandfather was born in Ireland and lived to be one hundred and twelve years of age and that the Easterdays are all full blooded Irish! The fact is that this grandfather, born in Maryland, died before he was forty-seven years of age. Of course many good people know very little about their grandfathers, and it is often the case that a man may give to his grandfather any reputation that his imagination may suggest without fear of successful contradiction! With apologies to all Irish friends, this witness is called down.

Whilst our Part First is fundamental and may be considered the most difficult to prepare, the work having now reached to the starting out of "the fourteen children," that which is to follow will be difficult enough, and will furnish a never-ending task. Intentionally there has already been a reaching down among the descendants of several of the fourteen, which will act as a sort of skeleton for that which may follow, yet, so far, there has been no regular tracing from any one of these fourteen. Very considerable material as touching some of them is in hand, but very little as touching others. The descendants of the fourteen yet to be attached to the family tree are now very numerous and very scattered, and they include a large majority of the Easterdays of our country. In advance of the systematic arrangement of the names at hand and within reach, the writer gives it as his opinion that the descendants of Conrad of "the seven brothers" and of Martin of "the three brothers" will present the largest crowds. Kate A. Easterday is a grandchild in the former and the writer is a great grandchild in the latter. Descendants of



eight of the ten men are clearly in evidence, but the writer seems now to have in hand very little relating to the offspring of Christian, the oldest of "the seven brothers," and it is well established that Jacob, the youngest of "the three brothers," died a married man, but childless.

The writer has already found much pleasure in introducing Easterday relatives to each other. This, too, has been gratefully received and acknowledged by those introduced. It is a fact, however, that letters are in hand which relate to Easterdays in America whom the writer does not expect to be able to attach to this tree which he is cultivating. The relationship may include all, and probably does, but some have evidently emigrated from Germany in later years. These later emigrants also include those who still cling to the name Oster-tag.

### **Aid Solicited.**

The aid of all members of the Easterday Family is earnestly solicited in the preparation of Part Second of this history. With the aid now attainable decided success is possible. There is danger in delay. One hundred years ago Part First might have been written with comparative ease. Such earlier writing would now furnish delightful reading. The present writer, however, confesses that the existence of the early record would have deprived him of the privilege of solving some intricate problems, a sort of service always fascinating to him; but he would gladly exchange this pleasure for that of the reading of the record made in the long ago.

Following is a recapitulation of names of the prominent Easterdays of a century ago. The Easterday reader is requested to aid in determining which of these is his ancestor. The final list of a few of their descendants, who reside in various parts of our country, is intended to be a help in this. Ordinarily, if the one seeking his place in the family can give the first name of his grandfather Easterday, and a hint as to the time and place of his birth, the writer will be enabled to place him with certainty. Such aid as suggests itself to the interested reader is anxiously and hopefully awaited.

## Recapitulation of Easterday Men.

### Sons of Christian Easterday.

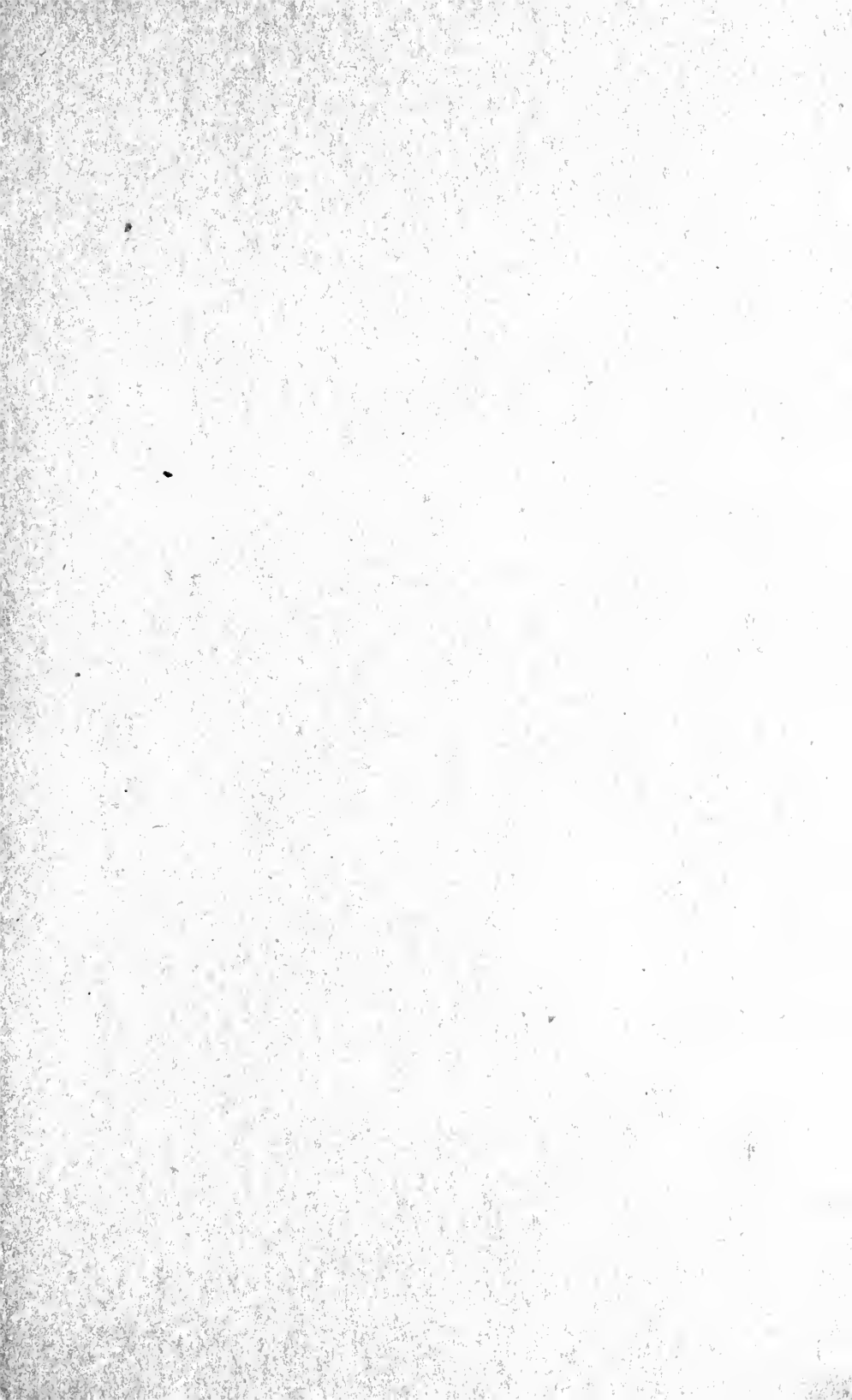
1. Christian—1752—1835.
2. Lewis—————
3. Daniel—1762—1833.
4. Conrad—1769—1825.
5. Francis—1770—1841.
6. Jacob—1772—1840.
7. Abraham—1777—1823.

### Sons of Martin Easterday.

1. Martin—1756—1840.
2. George—1765(?)—1850.
3. Jacob—1774—1824.

### A Few Descendants.

- Of Lewis: James W. Easterday, Carrollton, Ky., John D. Easterday, San Jose, Calif., Mrs. L. A. Spitzer, San Jose, Calif.
- Of Daniel: George J. Easterday, Washington, D. C., John S. Easterday, Charleston, W. Va., A. F. Easterday, Mena, Arkansas.
- Of Conrad: Martin V. Easterday, Myersville, Md., Miss Sybil U. Easterday, Mayfield, Calif., Miss Pearl Easterday, Howlands, Ind., Luther Reek Easterday, Indianapolis, Ind., Bradley Easterday, Sumpter, Okla.
- Of Francis: George E. Easterday, Jefferson, Md.
- Of Jacob: Miss Virginia Easterday, Prairie Ave., St. Louis, Missouri.
- Of Abraham: H. W. Easterday, Unionville, Mo., Alvin W. Easterday, Eustis, Neb.
- Of Martin: Melancthon Easterday, Cairo, Ill., David A. Easterday, Chewelah, Wash., Martin V. Easterday, Steilacoom, Wash., Elias S. Easterday, Nokomis, Ill., T. R. Easterday, Sault St. Marie, Mich.
- Of George: John Easterday, Leesville, O., S. R. Easterday, Toledo, O., Wm. Easterday, Albion, Ind.



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